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MEMO

TO: Capitol Press Corps

FROM: Brent Cranfield, House Communications

DATE: July 20, 2006

SUBJECT: RSS Technology for House website

CC: Jay Walker, Chief of Staff
               Riley Lowry, Member Services Director

In a world heaving under the weight of billions of web pages, keeping up to date with the information you want can be a difficult and time consuming. Wouldn't it be better to have the latest news and features delivered directly to you, rather than clicking from site to site?

RSS allows you to see when sites from all over the internet have added new content. You can get the latest headlines and articles (or even audio files, photographs or video) in one place, as soon as they published, without having to remember to visit each site every day. It takes the hassle out of staying up-to-date, by showing you the very latest information that you are interested in.

There is some discussion as to what RSS stands for, but most people for "Really Simple Syndication." RSS feeds are just a special kind of web page, designed to be read by computers rather than people. It might help to think of them as the free, internet version of the old-fashioned ticket-tape news wire machines.

Not all websites currently provide RSS, but it is growing rapidly in popularity and many others, including the Guardian, New York Times and CNN provide it. We have RSS feeds for both our text and video stories.

How do I start using RSS feeds?
In general, the first thing you need is something called a news reader. This is a piece of software that checks RSS feeds and lets you read any new articles that have been added to them. There are so many different versions, some of which are accessed using a browser, and some of which are downloadable applications. Browser-based news readers

let you catch up with your RSS feed subscriptions from any computer, whereas downloadable application let you store them on you main computer. In the same way that you either download your e-mail using Outlook, or keep it on a web-based service like Hotmail.

Once you have chosen a news reader, all you have to do is to decide what content you want to receive in your news reader, by finding and subscribing to the relevant RSS feeds. For example, if you would like the latest Georgia House of Representatives press release, simply visit the House website and you will notice an orange RSS button on the left hand side. Click on that button, find the information you want to subscribe to type, right click the link, and select ***Subscribe in default RSS reader.***

How do I get a news reader?

There is a range of different news readers available and new versions are appearing all the time. Different news readers work on different operating systems, so you will need to choose one that will work with your computer.

If you have your own website?

If you run your own website, you can use RSS feeds to display the latest headlines from other websites on your site.

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